of France and Belgium against unprovoked aggression, in defence of Germany, if a new West European settlement could be reached, against unprovoked aggression by any other party to such a settlement. " These, together with our treaty of alliance with Irak and our projected treaty with Egypt," are our definite obligations. In addition, our armaments may be used in bringing help to a victim of aggression in any case where, in our judgment, it would be proper under the provisions of the Covenant to do so. I use the word *may* deliberately, since in such an instance there is no automatic obligation to take military action. It is moreover right that this should be so, for nations cannot be expected to incur automatic military obligations save for areas where their vital interests are concerned." Our oldest ally, Portugal, seems to have slipped his memory, but his definition of British policy was generally approved. That treaty obligations, old and new, had to be kept was an axiom. To pledge our support in advance to victims of aggression in every part of the world was ruled out, not only by the limitations of our material strength, but by our geographical position.

XVII. AUSTRIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA

That Austria had been able to live in an economic sense was largely due to British friendship and financial support, and when Hitler began campaigning against her independence we declared her preservation a British interest. The first declaration was made by England and France in August 1933, when Neurath, the German Foreign Minister, curtly bade us mind our own business. It was repeated in Parliament on several occasions, and nowhere was the murder of Dollfuss in 1934 more sincerely deplored. Since, however, it was well understood that we should not go to war to save

the little Republic, our protests produced no effect in Berlin. Its life hung on the slender thread of Mussolini's pledge in 1934- " I will stand by Austria to the end/' The Austro-German agreement of 1936, calling off the Nazi campaign in return for a promise to pursue a German policy, was interpreted as an attempt to procure Italy's friendship by leaving her *protege* alone. The *dttente>* however, was purely superficial, for the feeble dictatorship of Schuschnigg, who refused to accept the Socialists as allies in the defence of the national cause, encouraged the Nazis to work for his overthrow. The last chance of survival disappeared when the Duce's need for German